

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS BEFORE THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES October 26, 2005 We Have Been Warned

We have been warned. Prepare for a broader war in the Middle East, as plans are being laid for the next U.S. led regime change-- in Syria. A UN report on the death of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri elicited this comment from a senior U.S. policy maker: "Out of tragedy comes an extraordinary strategic opportunity." This statement reflects the continued neo-conservative, Machiavellian influence on our foreign policy. The "opportunity" refers to the long-held neo-conservative plan for regime change in Syria, similar to what was carried out in Iraq.

This plan for remaking the Middle East has been around for a long time. Just as 9/11 served the interests of those who longed for changes in Iraq, the sensationalism surrounding Hariri's death is being used to advance plans to remove Assad.

Congress already has assisted these plans by authorizing the sanctions placed on Syria last year. Harmful sanctions, as applied to Iraq in the 1990s, inevitably represent a major step toward war since they bring havoc to so many innocent people. Syria already has been charged with developing weapons of mass destruction based on no more evidence than was available when Iraq was similarly charged.

Syria has been condemned for not securing its borders, by the same U.S. leaders who cannot secure our own borders. Syria was castigated for placing its troops in Lebanon, a neighboring country, although such action was invited by an elected government and encouraged by the United States. The Syrian occupation of Lebanon elicited no suicide terrorist attacks, as was suffered by Western occupiers.

Condemning Syria for having troops in Lebanon seems strange, considering most of the world sees our 150,000 troops in Iraq as an unwarranted foreign occupation. Syrian troops were far more welcome in Lebanon.

Secretary Rice likewise sees the problems in Syria-- that we helped to create-- as an

opportunity to advance our Middle Eastern agenda. In recent testimony she stated that it was always the administration's intent to redesign the greater Middle East, and Iraq was only one part of that plan. And once again we have been told that all options are still on the table for dealing with Syria-- including war.

The statement that should scare all Americans (and the world) is the assurance by Secretary Rice that the President needs no additional authority from Congress to attack Syria. She argues that authority already has been granted by the resolutions on 9/11 and Iraq. This is not true, but if Congress remains passive to the powers assumed by the executive branch it won't matter. As the war spreads, the only role for Congress will be to provide funding lest they be criticized for not supporting the troops. In the meantime, the Constitution and our liberties here at home will be further eroded as more Americans die.

This escalation of conflict with Syria comes as a result of the UN report concerning the Hariri death. When we need an excuse for our actions, it's always nice to rely on the organization that our administration routinely condemns, one that brought us the multi-billion dollar oil-for-food scandal and sexual crimes by UN representatives.

It's easy to ignore the fact that the report did not implicate Assad, who is targeted for the next regime change. The UN once limited itself to disputes between nations; yet now it's assumed the UN, like the United States, has a legal and moral right to inject itself into the internal policies of sovereign nations. Yet what is the source of this presumed wisdom? Where is the moral imperative that allows us to become the judge and jury of a domestic murder in a country 6,000 miles from our shores?

Moral, constitutional, and legal arguments for a less aggressive foreign policy receive little attention in Washington. But the law of unintended consequences serves as a thorough teacher for the slow learners and the morally impaired.

Is Iraq not yet enough of a headache for the braggarts of the shock and awe policy? Are 2,000 lives lost not enough to get their attention? How many hundreds of billions of dollars must be drained from our economy before it's noticed? Is it still plausible that deficits don't matter? Is the apparent victory for Iran in the Shiite theocracy we've created in Iraq not yet seen as a disturbing consequence of the ill-fated Iraq regime change effort? When we have our way with the next election in Lebanon and Hezbollah wins, what do we do? If our effort to destabilize Syria is no more successful than our efforts in Iraq, then what? If destabilizing

Syria leads to the same in Iran, what are our options? If we can't leave now, we'll surely not leave then-- we'll be told we must stay to honor the fallen to prove the cause was just. We should remember Ronald Reagan's admonition regarding this area of the world. Ronald Reagan reflected on Lebanon in his memoirs, describing the Middle East as a jungle and Middle East politics as irrational. It forced him to rethink his policy in the region. It's time we do some rethinking as well.